

Office of the Director
of Central Intelligence

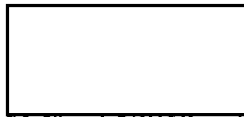


DATE: 7 March 1974

TO: The Director

SUBJECT:

The attached is a circuit closer. It has a slightly complicated history, the details of which I will not burden you with unless you are particularly interested. Hall wrote you in December (as the attached note indicates). That letter was followed up by a 31 January note to me which set the stage for a detailed briefing presented to interested Agency officers on 15 February. The letter offered for your signature is simply a polite reply which winds up this exchange.



George A. Carver, Jr.

Deputy for National Intelligence Officers

Attachment

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

The Honorable Albert C. Hall
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Intelligence)
Department of Defense
Room 3E282, Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Al:

I agree with the conclusions of your letter of 26 December 1973, namely, that the intelligence community must better quantify and communicate to our consumers the uncertainties in our estimates. The problems of dealing with uncertainties in ICBM throw-weight and CEPs were clearly presented in the attachments to your letter and in the briefing given at CIA by [redacted] and representatives of [redacted] on 15 February.

The complexity of the problem, as you pointed out in your letter, requires different methods for determining and expressing uncertainty depending on the nature of the judgment--whether missile CEPs or Soviet troop strength in Eastern Europe--and the type and amount of information available. Accordingly, the efforts we have underway to address uncertainty vary. [redacted]

[redacted]

For more subjective judgments, we are experimenting with methods of expressing the likelihood of a given development using Bayesian analysis. Also, we have scheduled an interagency study for completion in June 1974 covering prospects for determining accuracies of new Soviet ICBMs and SLBMs. The specific purpose of this study will be to address uncertainties in Soviet missile accuracy.

Beyond the efforts of CIA intelligence producers to deal with the problem according to general classes of estimative judgments, the National Intelligence Officers are to assure that

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the intelligence products over which they have cognizance contain as precise expressions of confidence and uncertainty as we are capable of making. Also, the evaluation process for the Key Intelligence Questions requires explicit treatment of the problem of uncertainty in the handling of each question.

25X1 Your letter and the [] report were appreciated and will be circulated for use by elements of CIA, the NIOs, and the Intelligence Community Staff.

Sincerely,

W. E. Colby

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